

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 IO-13 /086 W
-----241332 027399 /45

R 241316Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0008
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0370
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05472

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR XG US JA
SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON TRILATERALISM

1. SUMMARY: SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL IN
DISCUSSION OF US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS VOLUNTEERED FRENCH
VIEWPOINT ON TRILATERALISM, IN WHICH HE STRESSED FRENCH
OPPOSITION TO TREATMENT OF NATO AS THE EUROPEAN CORNER
OF TRILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. FOR FRANCE THE NINE MUST
BE THE GEOMETRIC PARTNER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RELAXED DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS US-FRENCH
RELATIONSHIPS RELATING TO NATO, FRANCOIS DE LABOULAYE
DIRECTOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, GAVE
DCM VIGOROUS EXPOSITION OF FRENCH VIEWS ON TRILATERALISM
HELD BY PRESIDENT GISCARD AND SECRETARY GENERAL SOUTOU.
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FRENCH ARE CONCERNED, HE SAID, AT TRILATERALIST INFLUENCE
IN NEW US ADMINISTRATION, NOT BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION TO
THE CONCEPT BUT BECAUSE TENDENCY THEY PERCEIVE IN
WASHINGTON TO REGARD NATO ("THE 13") AS THE EUROPEAN
CORNER OF THE TRIANGLE. FRENCH ALSO FIND
TRILATERALISM THUS FAR TO BE A RATHER VAGUE AND
UNSTRUCTURED CONCEPT. THEY HAVE NO OBJECTION TO

PERCEPTION OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE OF THE THREE WESTERN-WORLD INDUSTRIAL GIANTS AND OF NECESSITY FOR CLOSE COOPERATION, BUT TO GOF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY HAS TO BE THE EUROPEAN ELEMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP. PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS BEEN QUITE SPECIFIC ON THIS POINT TO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, AND SECRETARY GENERAL SOUTOU HAS REITERATED IT EMPHATICALLY TO FOREIGN MINISTRY SENIOR STAFF.

3. DE LABOULAYE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS VIEWPOINT IS FULLY CONSISTENT WITH FRENCH INSISTENCE ON RESTRICTING NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE TO DEFENSE MATTERS WITHIN ITS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. HE ADDED FURTHER THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS TOLD MINISTRY OFFICIALS THAT HE WILL NOT RPT NOT BE PRESENT AT THAT PORTION OF MAY SUMMIT WHICH COVERS A NATO SUMMIT MEETING ALTHOUGH PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN ECONOMIC SUMMIT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS05472
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770064-0409
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770213/aaaaalmf.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b363c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3240955
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH VIEWS ON TRILATERALISM
TAGS: PFOR, XG, US, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b363c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009